

STATUS OF CLAIMS

Claims 1-13 are pending.

Claims 1-4, 7-9 and 11-13 stand rejected.

Claims 1, 6-7, 9 and 11 have been amended.

Claims 4-5 and 10 have been canceled herein without prejudice or disclaimer.

REMARKS

Reconsideration of this application is requested in view of the following remarks and accompanying amendments.

Allowable Subject Matter

The Examiner is thanked for indicating that claims 5, 6 and 10 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. In order to expedite allowance of the present application, independent claim 1 has been amended to include the subject matter of claim 5 (and intervening claim 4), and independent claims 9 and 11 have been amended to include the allowable subject matter of claim 10.

Accordingly, Applicant respectfully submits independent claims 1, 9 and 11 should be in condition for allowance. Claims 2-3 and 6-8 should be allowable at least by virtue of their ultimate dependence from claim 1. Likewise, claims 12-13 should be allowable at least by virtue of their ultimate dependence from claim 11.

These amendments have been made without prejudice or disclaimer, and, without limitation, without prejudice to the right of Applicant to introduce claims identical to or similar to original claims 1, 9 or 11, and any of their dependent claims, in one or more continuation or continuation-in-part applications claiming benefit of the present application. Without limitation, the present amendments do not reflect agreement or admission by Applicant as to the characterization of the prior art in the Office Action.

Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 1, 4 and 7 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Miller (U.S. Patent No. 4,064,403). Further, claims 1 and 9 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Kao (U.S. Patent No. 4,441,029). As indicated above, independent claim 1 has been amended to include the allowable subject matter of claim 5, as well as intervening claim 4. Accordingly, claim 1 should now be in condition for allowance. Claim 4 has been canceled, and therefore the rejection thereto rendered moot. Claim 7 should be allowable at least by virtue of its ultimate dependence from claim 1. Finally, claim 9 has been amended to include the allowable subject matter of claim 10. Accordingly, claim 9 should now be in condition for allowance.

Reconsideration and withdrawal of the 35 U.S.C. § 102 rejection of claims 1, 4, 7 and 9 is respectfully requested.

Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 2 and 3 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Miller. Claim 8 has been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Miller in view of Rojo et al. (U.S. Patent No. 4,629,904). Claims 11-13 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Applicant-admitted prior art (Joachim Raabe). As set forth above, independent claim 1 has been amended to include the subject matter of allowable claim 5. Accordingly, claims 2-3 and 8 should be allowable at least by virtue of their ultimate dependence from claim 1. As set forth above, independent claim 11 has been amended to include the allowable subject matter of claim 10. Thus, claims 12 and 13 should be allowable at least by virtue of their dependence from claim 11.

Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests withdrawal of the 35 U.S.C. § 103 rejection of claims 2-3, 8 and 11-13.

It is believed that all of the pending claims have been addressed. However, the absence of a reply to a specific rejection, issue or comment does not signify agreement with or concession of that rejection, issue or comment. In addition, because the arguments made above may not be exhaustive, there may be reasons for patentability of any or all pending claims (or other claims) that have not been expressed. Finally, nothing in this paper should be construed as an intent to concede any issue with regard to any claim, except as specifically stated in this paper, and the amendment of any claim does not necessarily signify concession of unpatentability of the claim prior to its amendment.

CONCLUSION

Applicant believes he has addressed all outstanding grounds raised by the Examiner and respectfully submits the present case is in condition for allowance, early notification of which is earnestly solicited.

Should there be any questions or outstanding matters, the Examiner is cordially invited and requested to contact Applicant's undersigned attorney at his number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,

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Dated: February 21, 2011